



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM FOR MIDDLE-MILE BROADBAND
NETWORK PROJECTS (EP ver; rev 5/2025)**

Project Information

Encroachment Permit Number: 03-25-6-BB-0262

DIST-CO-RTE: 03-PLA-28

PM/PM: 9.344/11.028

Project Name (if applicable): Arcadian State Route 28 Middle-Mile Broadband Network Project

Project Description

Arcadian, in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Department of Technology, proposes to install broadband infrastructure, consisting of conduit, fiber optic cable, vaults, and markers on State Route (SR) 28 between post mile (PM) 9.344 and PM 11.028 in Placer County.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

- Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
- Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

- Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080.51)
- Categorically Exempt. Class.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
 - No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.
- Covered by the Common Sense Exemption.** This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Dotrik Wilson	<i>Dotrik Wilson</i>	5/15/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Najed Dakak	<i>Najed Dakak</i>	05/15/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date



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Caltrans NEPA Determination

Caltrans has determined this project meets the conditions set forth below and therefore is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA, provided the following conditions are met:

- The action is required in order to implement a project that is part of the California Middle-Mile Broadband Network;
- The Federal Action consists of: Approval of a non-highway use of the right-of-way/grant of a right-of-way use agreement or utility installations along or across a transportation facility;
- The action does not, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts as described in 23 CFR 771.117(a);
- The action does not involve unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b):
 - Significant environmental impacts;
 - Substantial controversy on environmental grounds;
 - Significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f)¹ requirements or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; or
 - Inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local law, requirement or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action.
- Sufficient information to issue a Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding must be included in the CE documentation;
- The action would not significantly encroach on the base floodplain and no impacts to the natural and beneficial floodplain values are anticipated;
- The action would not impact the features or attributes of a designated scenic river that make it eligible for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers published by the U.S. Department of Interior/U.S. Department of Agriculture;
- The action does not require any U.S. Coast Guard construction permits;
- The use of this CE certifies that the project has been evaluated and is designed to prevent unauthorized releases of hazardous materials. Caltrans would maintain compliance with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Soil Management Agreement for Aerially Deposited Lead-Contaminated Soils effective July 1, 2016, and that there are no known Cortese sites within the project footprint based on a record search;

¹ Middle-Mile Broadband Network Projects are not considered transportation projects and therefore exempt from the requirements of 23 CFR 774



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- The action does not require formal Section 7 Consultation for effects to federally listed or proposed species or critical habitat (likely to adversely affect determination for any species or critical habitat), or can be covered under an existing Programmatic Biological Opinion or the Programmatic Biological Opinion/Programmatic Letter of Concurrence for Middle-Mile Broadband Network activities; and
- The action is consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management Plan, if applicable.

The proposed project(s) are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(2)**
- 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**
- Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Dotrik Wilson

Print Name

Dotrik Wilson

Signature

5/15/2025

Date

Project Manager

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Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 5/15/25



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Continuation Sheet:

Purpose

This Middle-Mile Broadband Network project would install the broadband infrastructure along the State Highway System (SHS) necessary to connect to a third-party operated Last Mile Broadband Network which would bring internet connectivity to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Need

In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring high-speed broadband service to all Californians.

The lack of available middle-mile broadband infrastructure has been a major issue in connecting California's communities. The statewide open-access middle-mile network included in SB 156 is a foundational investment to ensure every Californian has access to broadband internet service that meets the connectivity needs of today, and well into the future. This project intends to support providing critical statewide broadband infrastructure to enhance access to and increase the affordability of high-speed internet for all Californians.

Scope of Work

Work includes the following:

- Placement of temporary traffic control devices and signage.
- Removal of minor vegetation.
- Installation of underground high-density polyethylene conduit.
- Installation of underground fiber optic cable.
- Installation of twelve (12) approximately 24-inch-wide by 36-inch-long by 36-inch-deep pull vaults along the fiber optic conduit path.
- Installation of flexible post delineators at vault locations in unpaved areas.
- Placement of slurry backfill, cold planing approximately 0.25-inch-deep, and placement of approximately 48-inch-wide hot mix asphalt overlay.
- Application of temporary and permanent erosion control.

To facilitate conduit installation three different installation methods including, trenching, trench in pavement, and horizontal directional drilling would be used. Broadband conduit would cross structures by attaching to the bridge superstructure and/or railing.

Right of Way/Staging

All work would occur within the existing Caltrans right of way. All staging and storage would occur outside the Caltrans right of way.

Disposal/Borrow

Surplus excavated material would be hauled to a landfill and none would be disposed on site. No material borrow site is needed.



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Consultation/Coordination

The initial round of Tribal correspondence was mailed on February 28, 2025. The Chicken Ranch Rancheria prefers emails, so those individuals were emailed on February 27, 2025. The United Auburn Indian Community's online project notification was utilized on February 27, 2025. Follow up with each tribe occurred on April 2, 2025, with emails. Follow up phone calls were placed on April 21, 2025. Consultation is ongoing.

Permits/Approvals

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency would issue a Conditional Use Permit. Caltrans would issue an Encroachment Permit with specific conditions of approval. No other environmental permits or approvals would be required.